



Dana E. Blackwell
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

COMMISSIONERS:
CAROL O. BIONDI, VICE-CHAIR
PATRICIA CURRY
LILY GRIEGO
PHALEN G. HUREWITZ
HELEN A. KLEINBERG
DAISY MA
ROBERT G. MCCAMAN
DR. LA-DORIS MCCLANEY
SANDRA RUDNICK
ADELINA SORKIN, CHAIR
REVEREND G. LIND TAYLOR
DR. HARRIETTE WILLIAMS, VICE-CHAIR

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **July 21, 2003**, in room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Carol O. Biondi
Lily Griego
Phalen G. Hurewitz
Helen Kleinberg
Daisy Ma
Robert McCaman
Sandra Rudnick
Rev. G. Lind Taylor
Dr. Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused)

Patricia Curry
Nina Sorkin
Dr. La-Doris McClaney

Vice Chair Carol Biondi called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the July 21, 2003 meeting was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the June 16, 2003 general meeting were unanimously approved with amendments.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Vice Chair Biondi reminded Commissioners about the upcoming annual retreat and asked that those who are interested in participating on the retreat committee to please contact the Executive Director.
- Commissioner Rudnick reported that Judge Nash convened a work group on psychotropic medication protocols on July 1st. It is her hope that the protocols developed as a result of the work group will be more stringent and will provide direction with respect to monitoring, communication, and follow-up. The next meeting will take place on July 28th.

OLD BUSINESS

Personnel Committee

Dana Blackwell, Executive Director, reported that the Personnel Committee met on June 17th regarding the permanent staff position. The qualifications for a Foster Youth Worker were reviewed. The completion of the ILP plan is a mandatory requirement. Since the number of foster youth who complete this requirement is low, it was the committee's determination to fill the position at the Intermediate Typist Clerk level with recruitment efforts focused on a qualified emancipated youth. Trinity Wallace-Ellis, Youth Representative, has agreed to help Ms. Blackwell in recruitment efforts.

Vice Chair Biondi suggested that County regulations regarding this position be more inclusive of all foster youth rather than restrictive. Ms. Blackwell suggested that discussions take place with the Department and the Department of Human Resources (DHR). John Oppenheim, Chief Deputy Director, indicated that the Department and DHR have been discussing this issue and he believes that there are creative ways in which the County can begin to employ more foster youth. He added that Supervisor Antonovich is also concerned about this issue.

The Commission concurred with the recommendations of the Personnel Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

2003-2004 Proposed Budget – Children and Families Budget Addendum

Alisa Drakodaidis, Service Integration Branch, stated that this is the second year that this restructured budget has been produced and will continue to be a standard addendum to the County budget. Ms. Drakodaidis indicated that the addendum includes 22 County departments that serve children and families and reflects \$4.6 billion, which is 28% of the County's proposed \$16.5 budget (\$200 million dollar decrease from the previous year).

Ms. Drakodaidis reviewed the addendums contents, including efforts to improve outcomes for children and families, county administered programs serving children and families, departmental program performance and results budget detail, funding sources and revenue streams. She indicated that the latter area continues to be the most under developed. Specifically, at the time the budget was prepared, 68 separate funding streams had been identified, with the Department having 18 of those. A workgroup is in

place to validate the funding sources to ensure that the funds are appropriately leveraged and maximized. Additional revenue sources are being pursued.

Commissioner Hurewitz asked how the budget process will evolve over the years, specifically to have a more collaborative approach. Ms. Drakodaidis believes that that will come about through the validation of the revenue maximization and the use of funds. By determining the exact source of the funds and the restrictions for its use, departments may then be motivated to work more collaboratively to leverage dollars. Commissioner Hurewitz suggested that money is invested in grant development to explore both existing and new funding streams as an opportunity to generate collaboration and enhance the opportunity to receive grants. Ms. Drakodaidis shared that activity is taking place in this area, however because grants do not always provide ongoing funding, there is more emphasis on long term secured funding.

Commissioner Kleinberg expressed concern that the addendum does not reflect the number of children who need the described services versus the number of children who are receiving the services. She requested that a realistic estimate of that information is contained in next year's addendum. Because the information contained within the addendum is based on self-reporting, Commissioner Kleinberg suggested that there should be either validation of the information or a more clear understanding of the information presented. Ultimately, Commissioner Kleinberg believed that the goal should be to determine if the appropriate amount of money is being allocated to services for children and families. Additionally, LACOE is not included in the addendum. Ms. Drakodaidis will try to obtain a supplemental budget from LACOE.

Vice Chair Williams suggested that in the future it would be helpful to have detail information specific to each program. Ms. Drakodaidis indicated that this is the plan for future budget addendums.

California's Program Improvement Plan in Response to the California Child and Family Services Review (Audit)

As a point of introduction, Mr. Oppenheim provided background information on the intent of the Adoption Safe Families Act of 1997, which includes a framework for monitoring program performance. With respect to the Audit, Mr. Oppenheim believes that the process by which it was conducted was mediocre. However, he was impressed with the accuracy with which it identified the most serious deficiencies in the state's child welfare system.

California failed the audit in all of the related seven outcome areas: Safety (2), Permanency (2) and Well Being (3). The state developed a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that outlined how statistically significant improvement would be attained in these areas over a 24 month period. If the state fails to achieve the PIP goals, a financial penalty will be levied against the state.

The PIP includes the concepts and focus of the Stakeholder Redesign Plan and AB 636, which converted the states internal quality assurance processes from program compliance

to an outcome orientation. The PIP under AB 636 includes a self-assessment, and peer reviews with neighboring counties to develop a county program improvement plan that will be submitted to the state through the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Kleinberg asked if the outcomes laid out in the PIP are congruent with the outcomes the Department is working to achieve. Mr. Oppenheim stated that he did not believe that the measures are as comprehensive as they could be, but AB 636 adds to the overall depth of the measures. Additionally, AB 636 will require that some modifications be made to CWS/CMS to ensure tracking of all required information. Currently, the Department is able to track approximately 50% of the measures. Commissioner Kleinberg asked if the Department is tracking the outcomes and is allocating the appropriate amount of resources to do so. Mr. Oppenheim stated that there must be a determination of the support activities that will contribute to the achievement of the outcomes and then allocate resources accordingly. This has not yet taken place however.

Vice Chair Williams asked who at the Department will be responsible for overseeing and ensuring that the goals are achieved. Mr. Oppenheim stated that the entire agency will be responsible for improving outcomes for children in accordance with the PIP. He also indicated that the Department is working with a consultant that is developing a training curriculum for staff on becoming an outcome-oriented agency rather than a policy-based agency. Additionally, training and orientation about the PIP will take place with line staff in small enough groups to encourage dialogue.

Mr. Oppenheim agreed that it would be reasonable for the Department to come back to the Commission to report on the progress toward the outcomes and the Department's ability to track them. He also suggested that the Commission will play a role in developing the Department's program improvement plan that will be submitted to the state.

Children Now/Scorecard Recommendations

Yolie Flores Aguilar, Executive Director Children's Planning Council (CPC), explained that in October 2002 the Board of Supervisors, at the recommendation of Supervisor Antonovich, requested the CPC to review the California Report Card and make recommendations to "improve the plight of children and families in Los Angeles County". Ms. Aguilar described the process that resulted in the development of three recommendations that will be further refined and ultimately submitted to the Board for approval and implementation. The recommendation, which holds relevance to the Commission, is the third recommendation: "Increase the number of children securing permanent homes/families from XX to XX."

Ms. Aguilar stated that the CPC's Transforming Systems Committee will host the forum, beginning in September, to include key stakeholders to further refine this recommendation. She indicated that she is looking forward to the Commissions involvement in this effort and stressed the importance of partnership to ensure that an appropriate long-term strategy is developed to maintain success in this area.

Dr. Sam Chan, Department of Mental Health, stated that the Transforming Systems Committee is dedicated to extending the work of County departments, community based organizations to examine system reforms. Currently the committee is seeking to understand all efforts toward permanency, beginning with a definition of permanency. He emphasized the importance of multi-agency collaboration and welcomed the Commission's participation in the further refinement of the permanency recommendation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Shirley Carney requested that she be provided with a copy of the binder Eric Marts distributed at the June 2, 2003 Commission meeting. Additionally, she testified that families involved with the Department receive information about in-home services and asked what will happen for families who did not receive these services before their children were removed from their homes. She further requested that families have the right to attend meetings between Dr. Sanders and Judge Nash.
2. Melana Luke Elias testified that as a result of the wide decision making discretion of CSWs, children have been unjustly separated from their families. She requested that the Commission implement checks within the child welfare system to prevent CSWs from going beyond the scope of their authority to allow a parent to leave the state with an infant under the age of one year old.
3. Jacqueline Eliazo-Valdez testified that her civil rights were violated. She is opposed to adoption bonuses and does not want children to be used as fiscal tokens.
4. Paula Eliazo testified that terrorism against families needs to be combated.
5. Warren Williams suggested that policy is not determined on the basis of fiscal concern. He further suggested that the County receives financial profit from removing children from their families.

MEETING ADJOURNED